

CLAIMS

1. A method of recording data comprising the acts of:
- receiving protected content at a data processing device;
  - determining that a portable memory recording device is trustworthy based on a hardware interface between said data processing device and said portable memory recording device; and
  - using said portable memory recording device to record said protected content onto a portable memory.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said act of determining that said portable memory recording device is trustworthy includes:
- determining that said portable memory recording device will not record said protected content onto portable memories falling outside of a class.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the determination that said portable memory recording device will not record said protected content onto portable memories falling outside of a class is made with less than absolute certainty.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein a characteristic of said class is that portable memories falling inside said class are not readable by portable memory reading devices lacking a defined feature.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein said defined feature comprises a physical feature.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein said physical feature is a proprietary physical feature.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein said defined feature comprises a proprietary data handling algorithm.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said hardware interface comprises a  
5 proprietary feature.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the act of:  
determining that recording of said protected content onto said  
portable memory is permitted by the terms of a license governing said protected  
10 content.

10. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable  
instructions to perform the method of claim 1.

11. A method of recording protected data comprising the acts of:  
receiving protected content at a data processing device;  
determining that a portable memory recording device will not  
record said protected content onto portable memories falling outside of a class; and  
using said portable memory recording device to record said  
20 protected content onto a portable memory.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the determination that said portable  
memory recording device will not record said protected content onto portable memories  
falling outside of a class is made with less than absolute certainty.

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13. The method of claim 11, wherein a characteristic of said class is that  
portable memories falling inside said class are not readable by portable memory reading  
devices lacking a defined feature.

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14. The method of claim 13, wherein said defined feature comprises a physical feature.

5           15. The method of claim 14, wherein said physical feature is a proprietary physical feature.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein said defined feature comprises a proprietary data handling algorithm.

10           17. The method of claim 11, wherein said act of determining that said portable memory recording device will not record said protected content onto portable memories falling outside of a class comprises engaging in an authentication protocol between said data processing device and said portable memory recording device.

15           18. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions to perform the method of claim 11.

20           19. A device for handling content governed by a license comprising:  
            a processor;  
            a data port which communicates said content;  
            content-recording hardware communicatively connected to said data port, said content-recording hardware having an interface onto which a portable memory is mountable, said interface having a first feature that makes said interface  
25           incompatible with portable memories that are readable by devices built in accordance with an open standard; and

a memory which stores logic which is executable on said processor, said logic causing said memory to transmit content to said content-recording hardware through said data port when permitted by the terms of said license.

5                   20. The device of claim 19, wherein said feature comprises a proprietary feature.

                  21. The device of claim 19, wherein said feature comprises the shape of a receptacle onto which said portable memory fits.

10                   22. The device of claim 19, wherein said feature comprises a dimension of a receptacle onto which said portable memory fits.

                  23. The device of claim 19, wherein said portable memory comprises a  
15 plug which mounts on said interface, and wherein said feature comprises an arrangement of connecting elements that mate with said plug.

                  24. The device of claim 19, wherein said data port comprises a second feature that is incompatible with connectors built according to an open standard.

20                   25. A device for reading a portable memory which stores content governed by a rule, said device comprising:

                  a first interface onto which said portable memory mounts, said portable memory having a feature that makes said portable memory non-mountable on  
25 devices built in accordance with an open standard;

                  a communications port communicatively coupled to a rendering device which renders said content;

                  a processor; and

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protecting a feature of a portable memory reading or recording device whereby said feature is made proprietary, said feature enabling the creation or reading of a non-standard portable memory recording;

determining that an entity is trustworthy to make a portable memory reading or recording device that does not violate rules governing usage of content; and

30. A method of facilitating the limited copying of protected content comprising the acts of:

protecting a feature of a portable memory reading or recording device whereby said feature is made proprietary, said feature enabling the creation or reading of a non-standard portable memory recording;

determining that an entity is trustworthy to make a portable memory reading or recording device that does not violate rules governing usage of content; and

permitting said entity to manufacture a portable memory reading or recording device having the proprietary feature.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein said non-standard portable memory  
5 recording comprises a recording onto a portable memory that is physically incompatible with portable memory reading or recording devices built according to an open standard.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein said feature comprises a shape of  
said portable memory.

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33. The method of claim 31, wherein said feature comprises a dimension  
of said portable memory.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein said feature comprises a plug  
15 which mounts on said interface, and wherein said feature comprises an arrangement of connecting elements that mate with said plug.

35. The method of claim 30, wherein said non-standard portable memory  
recording comprises a recording wherein data is manipulated according to a proprietary  
20 data manipulation algorithm, and wherein said feature comprises said proprietary data manipulation algorithm.

36. The method of claim 30, wherein said rules are in the form of an  
electronic license.

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37. The method of claim 30, wherein said rules are globally-applicable  
to a class of content and are not provided in the form of an electronic license.

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38. The method of claim 30, wherein said entity comprises the owner of the proprietary feature.

39. A system for the limited distribution of protected content comprising:

5 means for receiving protected data;

portable memory recording means for recording data onto a portable memory, said portable memory recording means being communicatively coupled to said means for receiving data;

mounting means for mounting said portable memory onto said  
10 portable memory recording means, said mounting means including at least one feature  
that makes portable memories readable by devices built in accordance with an open  
standard incompatible with said portable memory recording means;

rights management means for limiting the usage of protected content.

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